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SUBJECT: Netherlands/Liberia: Dutch Embassy will cover  
Partners' Forum

REF: STATE 201818 (NOTAL)

¶1. (SBU) Summary: The Dutch Embassy in Washington will send an officer to the February Liberia Partners' Forum. The Dutch are phasing out their humanitarian assistance to Liberia, citing lack of resources. Dutch development assistance is expected to continue at a modest level, but could increase over the next few years. End summary.

¶2. (U) The GONL expects to send political officer Wouter Vidlund from its Washington embassy to cover the Liberia Partners' Forum in February (co-hosted by the European Commission). MFA West Africa Division Head Paul Litjens told poloff January 10 that the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance are not likely to send personnel from The Hague.

¶3. (SBU) The Netherlands provided Liberia with approximately 2 million Euro in 2006 for police uniforms and equipment, according to Litjens. However, Liberia is not on the GONL's official list of 43 development partner countries, and Litjens explained that this precludes the Dutch from providing significantly greater levels of assistance.

¶4. (SBU) Separately, MFA Humanitarian Division Head Joost Andriessen told econoff January 11 that the Dutch are phasing out their humanitarian aid programs in Liberia. Andriessen said Liberia's situation requires more resources than the Dutch have available, especially given ongoing commitments in Sudan, the Great Lakes region, and the Netherlands' 43 development assistance partner countries (36 of which are in sub-Saharan Africa).

¶5. (SBU) Litjens suggested that the emergence of a Dutch coalition government that included the Labor Party (PvdA) - an increasingly likely scenario here - might result in the addition of either Sierra Leone or Liberia to the list. For now, he said, that is mere speculation.  
Blakeman